

Perceptions of Engaging with a Super-Strengths Approach in Elite Sport

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PERCEPTIONS OF SUPER-STRENGTHS APPROACH

Raw Data Themes

Lower Order Themes

Higher Order themes

I believed that I could be one of the best in the world
 It's really important for your confidence, to know I am genuinely good at something
 It gives you that bit of chest back feeling, that I am good
 It gives you a bit of self-importance
 It's nice knowing that actually yeah I think I am better than you at this.
 There is always that inner belief in yourself
 It has had a big impact on my confidence
 It gave me confidence to believe I could compete at an Olympic games
 The best thing about super strengths is the confidence it gives you

Self-belief

They see something in you and it makes you feel a bit special.
 I think it gives you more confidence because someone believes in you
 Knowing that you have this one thing that people see in you makes you feel good

Others' belief

It gives you more confidence because you're concentrating on what you are good at
 It makes you feel really good focusing on the positives.
 The positivity that comes from working on strengths makes a difference.
 It really makes you feel good knowing you are working on something you're good at

Positive focus

Super strengths is linked to confidence as it reminds you of your edge
 You know that you have something that it is better than anyone else.
 If they can't read what I'm going to do, I'll always have the upper hand on my serve.
 It gave me a weapon that other players worried about
 It gave me an aura, because people knew that I could lead the race and still win, and
 people had thought you couldn't do that.
 It adds relentless pressure to opponents when they know you have a super strength
 Other players fear you - when you believe someone fears you, you don't fear them
 It gives me a huge advantage over anyone else because nobody is winning that
 many points

Edge on others

Confidence

It gives me more confidence going into matches
 I had more confidence in leading my races
 When I raced, I raced a lot more confidently
 I felt more confident in my method going out there
 It's very simple playing to your super strengths; it's a very big confidence thing.
 It gives you more belief in yourself to go for the shots, more belief you can do it
 I feel confident that I will make the right decisions around the super strengths
 Knowing what works for you and that gives you the confidence to go out and race
 I knew that I would always be able to deliver those super strengths
 Believing I could deliver a game that could get me to the Olympics and win us a
 medal made a big impact on my performance

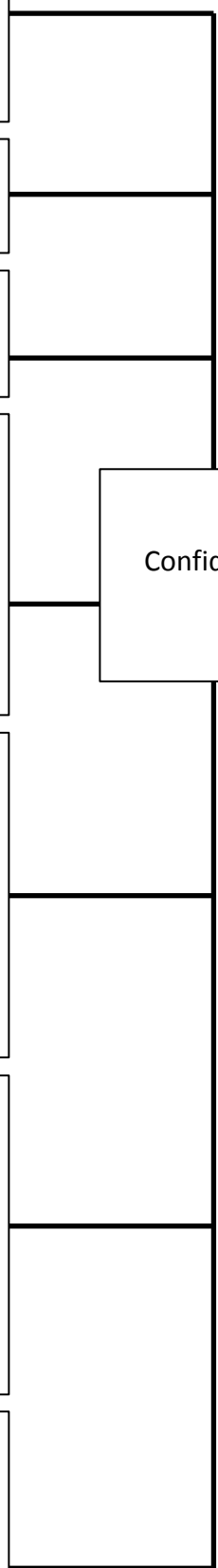
Competition confidence

Your confidence is sky high because you know you have done everything you could
 do to prepare for the comp.
 It's that confidence that you've put the right programme together for the vision
 We knew we had done the hard work, full of confidence to go and execute
 I had a lot more belief after putting it into practice
 It gives you confidence once you have done it, and you have seen
 If I am working on my strengths in training, I am going to be building confidence
 It's the knowledge and understanding that you have shown you can produce it that
 gives you confidence.
 Knowing that you just need to do what you have been doing gives you an
 untouchable confidence

Preparation

It gave a lot of players a lot of confidence in our team
 I could see that everyone had the confidence that they would just do their job.
 We believe that our team has that extra edge
 I didn't doubt at any point that we would win as we all knew what each of us was
 going to deliver
 Even when losing we still have this confidence that if we bring our super strengths
 out we will win.
 As a team it gives you inner confidence, there is no doubt about it.
 Standing up and telling each other what it was we brought to the team created a
 real confident environment and a real energy.

Team confidence



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I think there was a shift in emphasis from weaknesses to strengths
 It changes where you look for improvement
 It is different to the traditional way of always looking at weaknesses to get better
 Traditionally we always worked on weaknesses, this was different
 I think it is quite rare in sport for coaches to tell you that you are really good at this
 Working on my super strength was a big change from what I was used to
 It was a first for me, working on weaknesses not being the focus
 It changed what I think about what we look at when trying to improve
 It wasn't like what I had done before
 It's very good as it gives you a new way of thinking

Mind-set shift

I am much more focused when playing games in training
 It gives you more of a focus and purpose in training
 You go out to training with areas you want to focus on around your super strengths
 It gives you structure to your practice
 There was a clear focus in training to implement my strengths in the session
 It gives you a plan to work on in training

Training focus

It provides a simple strong message which is what a team needs
 It can give you a clear method for performing
 It helps you really establish your method for performance
 It is about clear messages, clear goals and focusing
 It provides a much clearer methodology about how you score your runs
 It gave me a real focused game plan of what I set out to do in a match
 It helps you just focus on one or a couple of things when performing
 It gives you a way of focusing your game on something
 It is your thing you bring to the team so you feel part of the cog in the wheel.
 Everyone has a super strength and so everyone has a part to play.

Strategy for competition

It's like a blueprint and as a team you always go back to it
 It was something I could always refer to
 It was something I could fall back on when the pressure was mounting
 It's very easy to keep referring back to your super-strengths in performance
 Whether it's going good or bad you can always go back to your super strengths.
 It's something to fall back on even if your game isn't going so well
 If you are having a tough time or a poor bit of form you can always go back there

Default method

You know where you are going once you have a super strength to work on
 Immediately it gives you focus and direction
 I think it gives me a focus
 It gives you a target, as in something you can always work towards no matter what
 It gives you much more clarity than trying to improve on lots of things
 It made me practice more, deliberately thinking of my way to succeed
 There was a real mentality shift trying to be a bit more proactive on the court
 I think it just gives you a clear focus, knowing what you are going to work on.
 It gives you focus and direction for improving

Goal direction

Clarity of purpose



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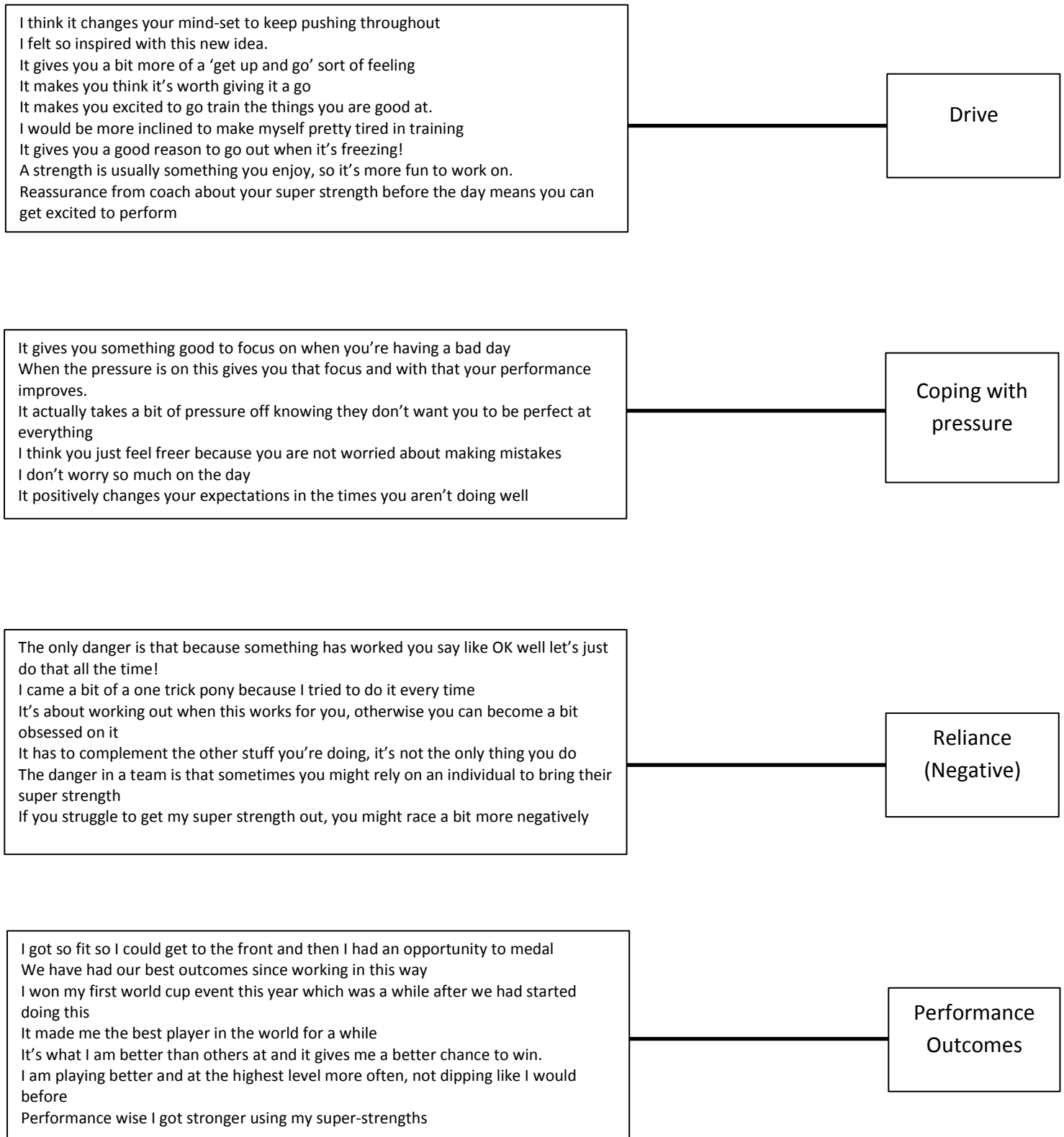


Figure 1. Higher-order, lower-order and raw data themes representing athletes' perceptions of the effects of the super-strengths approach.